

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

Share information carefully.You may be confused emotionally. Hard work will pay off. Your lucky day this week is Tuesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Careful who you share information with. Your intellect will make you popular with peers. Prepare for difficulties with your partner. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Your charm will be captivating. Your sensitive nature will impress others. Don't push your opinions on everyone. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



CANCER
(JUNE 22-JULY 22)

You may find a rare antique. Try to be more understanding of others. You may have problems with family. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



LEO
(JULY 23-AUG 22)

Handle your own workload. Empty promises are evident. Control your emotions about changes in the home. Your lucky day this week is Friday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Organise your time to accomplish more. Be creative in your pursuits. Respect others and be rewarded. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



LIBRA
(SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

You need some rest. Try to include friends in activities. Don't make unreasonable promises. Your lucky day this week is Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Focus on your needs. Rely on friends for advice. Be open to changes in your relationship. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Keep information to yourself. Teach your siblings about self- awareness. Socialise at work more. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't upset elders in your family. Change your living arrangements. Be considerate in your personal obligations. Your lucky day this week is Sunday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Have a serious talk with close friends. Be patient with family. Observe before getting involved in anything. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Travel will bring about interesting talks. Don't make promises you can't keep. Quality family time is needed. Your lucky day this week is Friday.

LS PICK

Donate blood, donate life

Blood donation has been a major concern of societies, and continues to be so, as blood donors are still scarce, compared to the regular demand for blood transfusions. Every day, all around the globe, many lose their lives due to lack of or delayed blood transfusion.

The whole procedure of donating blood is a monumental task as the whole procedure is accompanied by various rules and steps.

Finding a donor: The first, and often, the most daunting task, is to find someone who is willing to donate blood. And this person must be at least 16 or 17 years of age to be able to legally donate blood.

Required blood group: Blood groups like B positive are common, and so, finding a donor is often not a problem. However, groups like O negative are much less common, meaning finding a donor is very challenging.

Screening: Donors are screened for health risks that could make the donation unsafe for the recipient. The screening includes testing for diseases that can be transmitted by a blood transfusion, including HIV and viral hepatitis. The donor must also answer questions about medical history and take a short physical examination to make sure the donation is not hazardous to his or her health.

Obtaining the blood: There are two primary methods of obtaining blood from a donor. The most frequent is to simply take the blood from a vein as whole blood. This blood is typically separated

into parts, usually red blood cells and plasma, since most recipients need only a specific component for transfusions. A typical donation is 450 millilitres of whole blood, though 500 millilitre donations are also common. The other method is to draw blood from the donor, separate it using a centrifuge or a filter, store the desired part, and return the rest to the donor. This process is called apheresis, and it is often done with a machine spe-



cifically designed for this purpose. This process is especially common for plasma and platelets.

Donors are usually kept around the donation site for around 15 minutes after donating as most adverse reactions usually happen during or immediately after the donation. Blood centres typically provide light refreshments to help the donor recover. The needle site is covered with a bandaid and the donor is directed

to keep the bandage on for several hours.

Different countries all around the world are acquiring different methods to create national platforms where blood donation can take place. Many have taken initiatives and created Facebook pages where people can register to donate blood. These groups not only allow blood donation, but also create awareness and encourage people to carry out this noble act.

One such group operating in Bangladesh is Blood Helpline. The administrators of this group post where and when a blood transfusion is needed, along with the contact details of the person who needs it. Most of the members of this group are the youth, mainly consisting of university students.

Akash Ahmed, a teaching assistant and researcher at Department of Life Sciences at BRAC University, is a regular blood donor. He donates blood at blood donation programmes held at different hospitals. "If a single bag of blood can save a life, why would I not do it? As a biologist I know that after 4 months, the blood in my body will be replaced by new blood cells. So, why not help others who need my blood?" says Akash.

A single bag of blood can make the difference between life or death. So, everyone who is medically fit should donate blood at least once in his or her lifetime.

By Faiza Khondokar
Photo: Collected

KUNDALINI RISING

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There is a vital energy or life force flowing through us all, maintaining physical functions that keep us alive and healthy. Various cultures have assigned different names for this single life force; Qi, Chi, The Force. The Sanskrit term for life force is "prana." Someone deficient in prana is likely to become physically or mentally unwell. Vital energy may be increased and balanced through yogic breathing practices known as pranayama.

'Prana' = vital energy. 'Ayama' = 'to expand'.

Modern science has shown that regular pranayama is capable of treating asthma, stress-related disorders, anxiety and depression. Pranayama oxygenates and detoxifies the body, clearing the mind, strengthening the nervous system, balancing the two hemispheres of the brain, cleaning the aura, improving digestion, and releasing fears, insecurity, irritability, depression and other blocks.

Pranayama is an integral part of yoga. Controlled breathing creates the rhythm for asana practice, and relaxes the mind for meditation. Pranayama is the fourth

Pranayama – Expanding Your Energy

limb of the spiritual yoga. The great sage, Patanjali, outlined these limbs as Yama (ethical living), Niyama (healthy living), Asana (physical exercise), Pranayama (breath exercise), Pratyahara (withdrawing one's mind from the senses), Dharana (deep concentration), Dhyana (deep meditation) and Samadhi (enlightenment).

Pranayama consists of four stages:

1. Puraka (inhalation)
2. Abhyantarakumbhaka (the mindful pause after inhalation)
3. Rechaka (exhalation)
4. Bahya Kumbhaka (the mindful pause after exhalation)

Each stage of pranayama enhances physical awareness and enforces introspection.

Being mindful of your breath is the first step. Basic breath-awareness exercises are a good place to start. Slow down for a few moments and notice the pattern of your natural breath. How deep is it? How does it sound? Can you control it?

Like asanas, there are many types of pranayama. If you're new to pranayama, it



is best to learn from a guru or teacher. Once you are familiar with the form, you may continue the practice on your own, in pursuit of health, happiness and enlightenment.

Photo: Collected